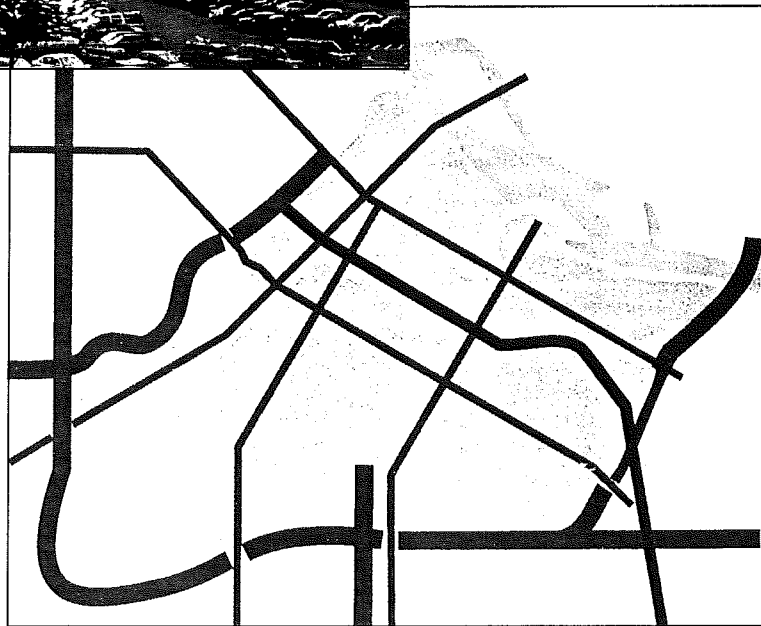


Development Objectives for

# NORTH NICOLLET MALL

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Prepared by:

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Minneapolis Planning Department  
Minneapolis Community Development Agency

November 1999

## **NORTH NICOLLET MALL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

Minneapolis Planning Department/Minneapolis Community Development Agency  
November 1999

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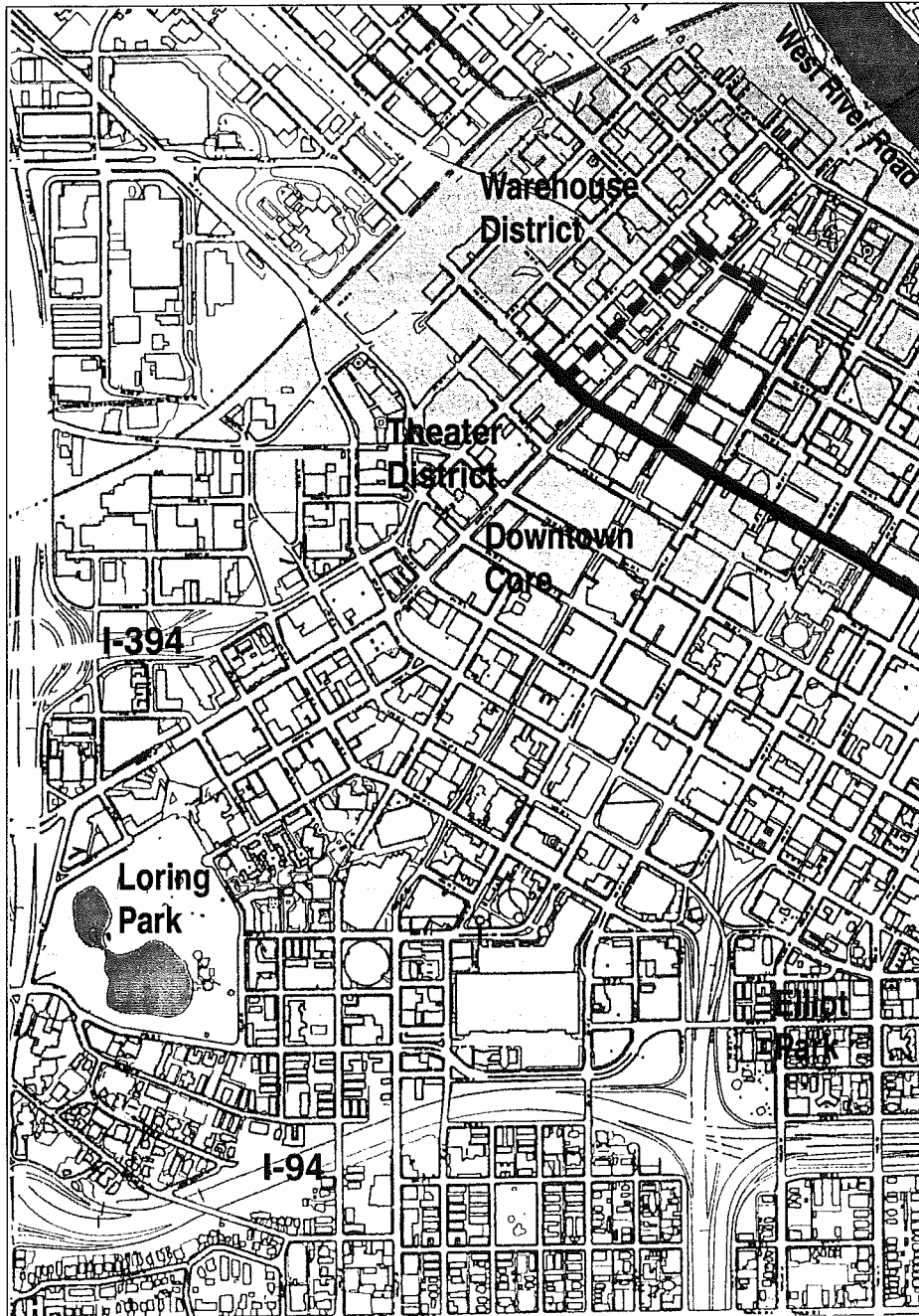
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Development Objectives for

## **NORTH NICOLLET MALL**

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**FIGURE 1: CONTEXT IN DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of preparing Development Objectives for North Nicollet Mall is to formulate a baseline set of criteria by which current and future development activities in this district should be directed and carried out. Setting these parameters is intended to enhance the value and function of the project area and to define the area's role of in relation to the city at large. As such, these Development Objectives are intended to establish the parameters within which decisions can be made regarding both public- and private investment in the project area.

### **1.2 Previous policies and resolutions**

These Development Objectives are intended to present the City's policy direction to the MCDA, City staff, private developers, citizens, and other interested parties. This document is prepared jointly as directed by the MCDA Executive Director and the Planning Director. These Development Objectives are written in accordance with Minneapolis City Council Resolution #96R-010 and MCDA Resolution #96-1429M. These Development Objectives will serve as a framework for private development decisions and public infrastructure needs in the North Nicollet Mall project area as defined herein.

Development Objectives for North Nicollet Mall were drafted using the following as guides:

- City Council policies contained in *Minneapolis: Downtown 2010: Continuing the Vision into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.
- City Council policies contained in *North Nicollet Mall Guidelines and Criteria*, Final Draft, dated September 13, 1990 (Exhibit C, Petn. No. 253121, Approved).
- Principles contained in the *North Nicollet Mall Masterplan*, 1990.

Much of the land in the project area for the *North Nicollet Mall Development Objectives* falls within the *Nicollet Mall Improvement, Maintenance, and Operation Assessment District* and/or the *Greater Hennepin Avenue Development District #58*. As such, development decisions pertaining to those blocks will be made in accordance with the policies established for both previously defined districts (see Section 2.4)

## **2.0 GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

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### **2.1 Project Area**

The project area for the *North Nicollet Mall Development Objectives* is comprised of all or some portions of ten different city blocks located at or near the north end

of Nicollet Mall. The project area is bounded on the north by Washington Avenue. It is bounded on the east by Marquette Avenue, on the south by South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and on the west by the eastern boundary of the Warehouse Historic District - which runs in a north-south direction (roughly mid-block) between Hennepin Avenue and First Avenue North (see Figure 2).

Within the project area there is a subset of four blocks that are considered to be the primary sites for potential development. These four blocks include the Old Nicollet Hotel Block, The Library Block, the Ritz Block, and the Powers Block. A full description of the characteristics of each of these blocks is given below.

The context – or frame – for the project area is comprised of those blocks that surround the project area. The blocks that comprise this contextual frame are depicted in the figures and schemes for reference purposes only.

## ***2.2 Context and Relationship within Neighborhood, City, and Region***

Redevelopment of the north end of Nicollet Mall offers an opportunity to make several important additions to Downtown Minneapolis. At the same time, the opportunity exists to refine those activities, uses, and spaces that already exist in an area that serves as the nexus of three of the City's key streets.

Redevelopment at the north end of the Mall should not be thought of in isolation of its surroundings. Instead, it should be thought of in context with the entire length of Nicollet Mall, the entire downtown stretch of Hennepin Avenue, the Downtown Core, the Hiawatha LRT line on South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and the cluster of green spaces that stretch from Washington Avenue toward the Mississippi River.

## ***2.3 Updated Zoning***

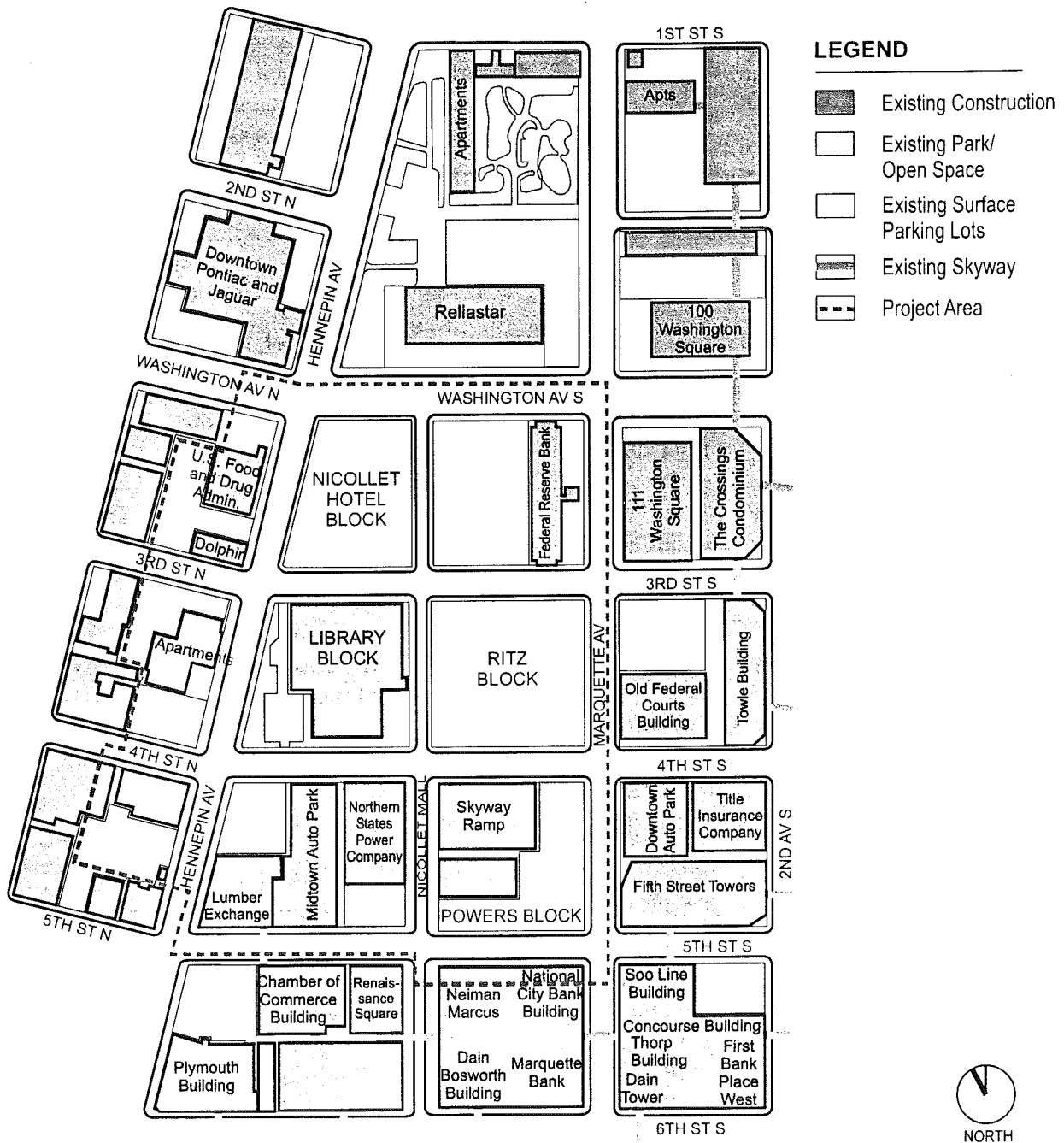
Those blocks in the project area that are south of South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and east of Hennepin Avenue are zoned B4-2; these blocks are considered part of the Downtown Core. Those blocks in the project area that are north of South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (up to Washington Avenue South) and east of Hennepin Avenue are zoned B4-1. These blocks are considered part of the Secondary Service District. Those blocks in the project area that are south of Washington Avenue and are situated between Hennepin Avenue and First Avenue North are zoned B4S-2. These blocks are also considered part of the Secondary Service District. All zoning categories stated are as per the Updated Zoning Code Revisions, recently approved by City Council in November 1999.

## ***2.4 Other Regulatory Districts***

*2.4.1 Nicollet Mall Improvement, Maintenance, and Operation Assessment District:* Those blocks which front onto Nicollet Mall are considered part of the Nicollet Mall Improvement, Maintenance, and Operation Assessment District. The half blocks that directly face the Mall are

Development Objectives:

## NORTH NICOLLET MALL



**FIGURE 2: PROJECT AREA**

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assessed differently than those half blocks that do not directly face the Mall. The Library is exempt from this special service district.

**2.4.2 Greater Hennepin Avenue Development District #58:** Those blocks on the west side of Hennepin Avenue and south of Washington Avenue are contained within the *Greater Hennepin Avenue Development District #58*. As such, redevelopment decisions pertaining to parcels within these blocks will be made in accordance with the program in both development districts. In the case of these blocks only, the policies established herein shall not supercede those established in the *Greater Hennepin Avenue Development District #58*.

**2.4.3 St. Anthony Falls Historic District:** Those blocks north of Washington Avenue are fully contained within the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. As such, any redevelopment north of the project area is subject to the requirements approved by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. There is no geographic overlap of the project area for the North Nicollet Mall Development Objectives and the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

**2.4.4 Warehouse Historic District:** The western boundary of the project area is the same as the eastern boundary of the Warehouse Historic District. As such, any redevelopment in the blocks directly west of the project area is subject to the requirements approved by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. There is no geographic overlap of the project area for the North Nicollet Mall Development Objectives and the Warehouse Historic District.

## **2.5 Characteristics of properties in the Area of Primary Development**

**2.5.1 The Old Nicollet Hotel Block:** The Old Nicollet Hotel Block is located on the northern most end of Nicollet Mall and on the southeast corner of Hennepin and Washington Avenues (see Figure 2). Presently, the Old Nicollet Hotel Block is used as a bus layover and as a surface parking lot. A large, unused bus shelter is located on the southwest corner of this block. (This bus shelter was moved from the west side of the 500 block of Hennepin Avenue in early 1999 to make room for relocation of the Shubert Theater.)

The City of Minneapolis owns the entire block. In anticipation of the once-proposed Downtown Shuttle Service, the block was purchased with a \$2.7 million grant from the Federal Government. That grant stipulates that some or all of the block must be used for a mass transit facility. If the block is not used for a mass transit facility, the City must repay the federal grant in full.



While the overall size of the block is slightly smaller than most downtown blocks, its highly visible location suggests the potential for significantly greater public use. The Old Nicollet Hotel Block lies at the intersection of the Downtown Core, the Gateway District, and the Warehouse District. It is near existing residential neighborhoods along the Mississippi River as well as those neighborhoods taking shape in the North Loop.

**2.5.2 *The Library Block:*** The Library Block is located between Hennepin Avenue and Nicollet Mall between South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and South 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The block is so-named because it is the site of the current Central Library facility. The block is also home to the Minneapolis Planetarium and the Heritage Hall (see Figure 2).

The Library Block has many of the same prominent features as the Old Nicollet Hotel Block. Most importantly, it faces onto both Hennepin Avenue and Nicollet Mall. As such, it offers the potential for future development that would forge a greater link between the Downtown Core, the Gateway District, and the Warehouse District. Under the City's new Zoning Code, the Library Block is part of the Downtown Core, thus allowing for a greater intensity of development. The New Central Library Implementation Committee has indicated the Library Block as its second choice site for the new Central Library (see below).

**2.5.3 *The Ritz Block:*** The Ritz Block is located between Nicollet Mall and Marquette Avenue, between South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and South 4<sup>th</sup> Street. A subsidiary of the OPUS Corporation owns the entire block. It has been used as a surface parking lot in the ten or so years since the Sheraton Ritz Hotel was demolished (see Figure 2).

The Ritz Block offers great potential for immediate development because the entire block is already assembled under single ownership. Under the City's new Zoning Code, the Ritz Block would become part of the Downtown Core, thus allowing for greater intensity of development. The New Central Library Implementation Committee has indicated that the Ritz Block is the preferred site for the new Central Library (see below).

**2.5.4 *The Powers Block:*** The Powers Block is located between Nicollet Mall and Marquette Avenue, between South 4<sup>th</sup> Street and South 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The OPUS Corporation owns approximately one-half of the block. The OPUS properties are currently used as a surface parking lot, which has been the case for the last ten or so years since the Powers Department Store was demolished. The Skyway Parking Ramp is located on the northwest corner of the block. Baker Investments owns this ramp. A vacant McDonald's restaurant is located immediately south of the Skyway Parking Ramp (see Figure 2).

The Powers Block is currently zoned as part of the Downtown Core. Its proximity to the existing office and retail core makes it a prime location for new development. The potential of this block is enhanced by its proximity to the intended Nicollet Mall station of the Hiawatha LRT line. The station is likely to be the busiest station on the entire LRT line. The southeast and southwest corners of the Powers Block are likely to see a great deal of foot traffic as they will be the primary transfer points between the Hiawatha LRT and the Downtown Circulator bus system. As such, any new development on this block should be wholly integrated into an intermodal transit station that facilitates easy access between the LRT, the Downtown Circulator bus service, and the downtown pedestrian circulation system. The City should seriously consider the possibility of extending the right-of-way for the LRT/Circulator station into the southern portion of the Powers Block, particularly if the timing of private development presents the opportunity. Because this block isn't currently owned by a single entity, site assembly of the parcels in this block will need to be addressed.

### **3.0 PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The City of Minneapolis has several objectives for development within the designated project area:

- 3.1 Increase the economic productivity of the project area by promoting complementary development of both public and private facilities.
- 3.2 Coordinate with Hennepin County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to provide new transit services including Light Rail Transit and a Downtown Circulator Bus Service.
- 3.3 Coordinate with Hennepin County, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and private property owners to provide an intermodal transit station at South 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Nicollet Mall which will (a) meet projected travel demand, and (b) facilitate easy connections between the Hiawatha LRT line, the Downtown Circulator, downtown sidewalks, open spaces, and the skyway system.
- 3.4 Construct a new Central Library that meets the program goals, functional requirements, architectural requirements, and operating goals recommended and approved by the Minneapolis Library Board.
- 3.5 Create a new downtown Park/"Great Space" that improves civic function and enhances the public image of the area of the project area by providing:
  - A structured "Great Space" for outdoor festivals and activities

- Green space for daily use and enjoyment of downtown workers, residents, and visitors
  - A heightened sense of the public image and function of a new Central Library
- 3.6 Improve and enhance the pedestrian environment and pedestrian circulation through improvements to existing streets and open spaces.
- 3.7 Improve and enhance the pedestrian environment and pedestrian circulation through the development of skyways and indoor pedestrian spaces that connect the project area with public transit facilities and the Downtown Core.
- 3.8 Protect and enhance the form and character of the downtown built environment by ensuring that redevelopment is consistent with sound urban design principles.
- 3.9 Encourage new infill development in the smaller parcels of underdeveloped land, particularly along Hennepin Avenue.
- 3.10 Wherever possible, provide replacement of short-term parking spaces as they are lost due to redevelopment.

## **4.0 LAND USES**

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### **4.1 Commercial Office Development**

The *Minneapolis Downtown 2010* plan indicates commercial office development as the preferred use along the north end of Nicollet Mall. Given the amount of commercial office space currently under construction in downtown, it may be several years before new commercial office space will be built in the Downtown Core.

When new commercial office development occurs in the project area, it should be considered for those redevelopment parcels closest to the existing core of commercial office properties—particularly along Marquette Avenue. New office construction may eventually be possible on sites that are currently underused. All office development along Nicollet Mall should have ground-level retail facing the Mall. All retail uses should be directly accessible from the Mall. Any new office development should be integrally linked to the skyway system. Any new office development should also be easily accessible to the Nicollet Mall LRT Station and the Downtown Circulator.

### **4.2 Hotel Development**

In light of current expansion of the Minneapolis Convention Center and the anticipated increase in the convention, visitor, and tourist industry in Downtown

Minneapolis, there is a corresponding likely demand for a major convention hotel. The North Nicollet Mall area should be considered for new hotel development.

Just as with office development, all hotel development along Nicollet Mall should have ground level retail facing the Mall (and nearby streets) with individual street-level entrances. All retail uses should be directly accessible from the Mall. Any new hotel development should be integrally linked to the skyway system. Any new hotel development should also be easily accessible to the Nicollet Mall LRT Station and the Downtown Circulator.

#### **4.3 Commercial Retail Development**

In keeping with the *Downtown 2010* plan, a compact retail district should be emphasized along the Mall. Regional comparison shopping facilities and major retailers (department stores) shall be encouraged outside of the project area, south of 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Retail facilities other than department stores—such as retail and service-type establishments that serve the residents and workers of the North Nicollet Mall area—are encouraged as a desirable use in the project area. Retail facilities that support street-level activity are encouraged as a desirable use in the project area. All new office, hotel, and residential buildings along Nicollet Mall should contain supportive retail and service establishments (such as restaurants, cafes, and specialty shops) that enhance nearby hotel, office, and residential uses. Such retail establishments shall have frontage to, and access along the Mall at the street level. Each retail unit shall provide direct pedestrian access to the Mall. A single street entrance to a collection of internally accessible retail units will not be permitted.

In addition to street-level retail, hotels, and office buildings, the project area could also contain retail uses on the skyway level. Stairs, escalators, and elevators to the skyway level shall be both visible from, and directly accessible from, Nicollet Mall, Hennepin Avenue, and Marquette Avenue.

Further construction of automobile-oriented retail uses shall be prohibited for all new development within the project area.

#### **4.4 Residential Development**

Expansion of the downtown residential market may be possible within the Primary Core and Secondary Service Districts. Residential development within the heart of downtown would help to fill out the number and kind of residential choices available to those who choose to live downtown. Residential development could occur in a full-block scheme as mixed use or in smaller, infill developments. As cited above, all residential development along Nicollet Mall should have ground-level, supportive retail facing the Mall.

## **4.5 Cultural/Entertainment Development**

**4.5.1 New Central Library:** The Minneapolis Library Board has determined the need for a new Central Library facility in Downtown Minneapolis.

The building program for the new Central Library calls for the following:

- A new four-level facility of approximately 350,000 gross square feet
- Three hundred parking spaces
- The ability to accommodate school buses
- An integral link to the skyway system

After studying a number of possible downtown sites, the New Central Library Implementation Committee has narrowed the potential sites for a new facility to the site of the current library and the Ritz Block, with a preference for the Ritz Block.

The Minneapolis Library Board and the City are interested in planning and constructing a new Central Library in conjunction with adjacent private development. The Minneapolis Library Board will consider sale or development of the current library site, but only if the program, function, operation, and architectural goals of the Library Board can be achieved.

The new Central Library should be sited in such a way as to accentuate its civic image and its prominence in Downtown Minneapolis. The visibility of, and accessibility to, the new building are considered a priority for the redevelopment of North Nicollet Mall.

**4.5.2 Entertainment:** In keeping with the *Downtown 2010* plan, all redevelopment and new infill development on the west side of Hennepin Avenue (south of Washington Avenue) shall be dedicated to street-oriented entertainment and specialty uses. In some cases, skyway-level entertainment and specialty uses may be possible.

## **4.6 Parks and Open Space**

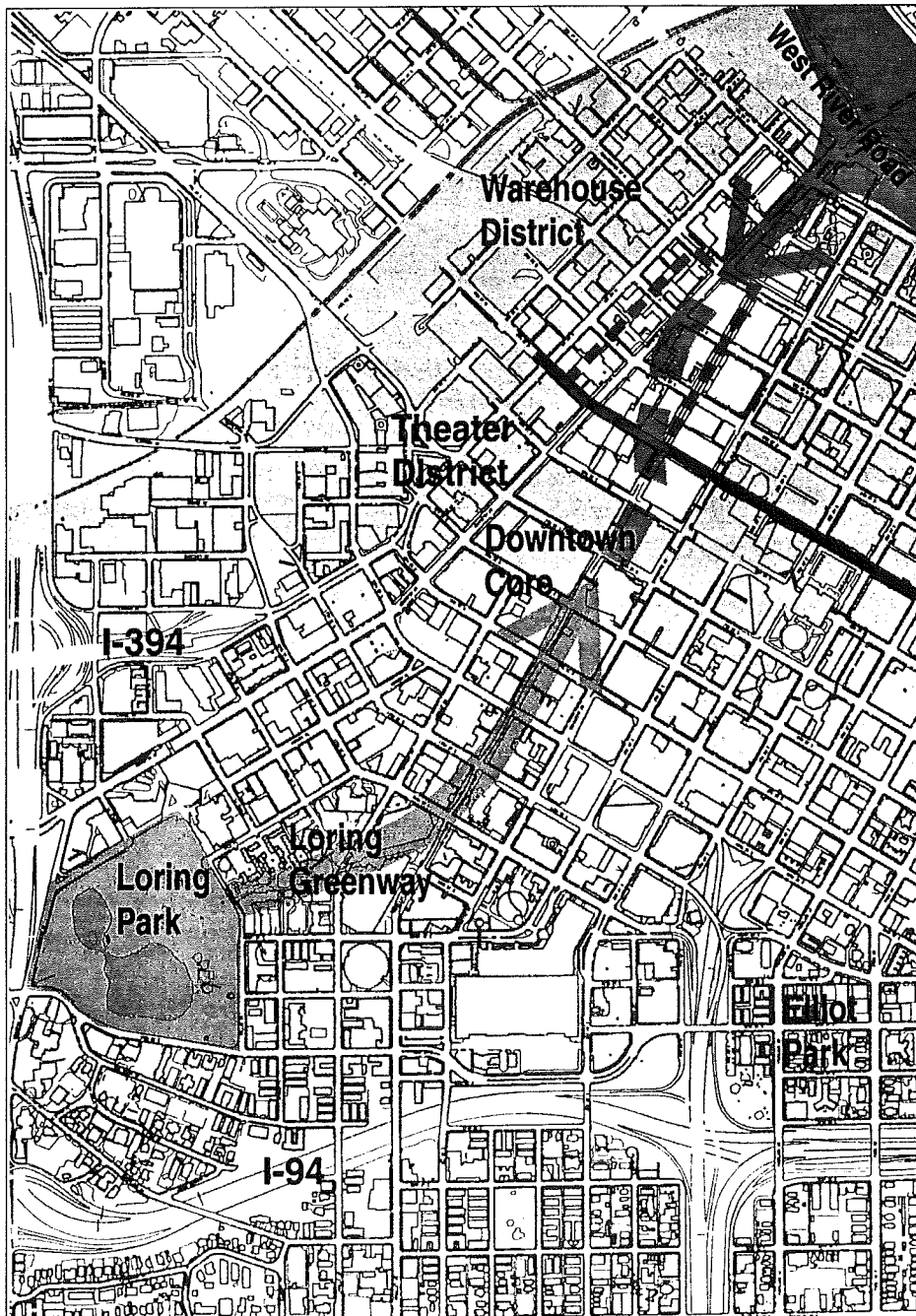
The north end of Nicollet Mall provides an opportunity to create the last link in a string of green spaces that stretch from the Lake District to the Mississippi River. This link can be forged if the park space in and around Gateway Plaza is extended south, while the path of foliage provided by the Loring Greenway and the South Mall is extended north (see Figure 3).

The owners of the former Federal Reserve Bank Building (now renamed Marquette Plaza) have indicated that they intend to reconstruct the existing open space on the west side of this block in order to eliminate the existing slope facing Nicollet Mall. This reconstructed green space should be complemented by the addition of a new downtown park that would serve residents, workers, and

Development Objectives:

## **NORTH NICOLLET MALL**

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**FIGURE 3: CONTEXT: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

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visitors to the North Mall area. Creation of a new outdoor Park/"Great Space" shall frame the intended architectural prominence of the new Central Library. This new park should accommodate daily informal use by the general public as well as periodic use for organized civic events and celebrations.

All downtown parks and open space, in the form of plazas, urban gardens, and widened sidewalks, shall be designed according to the following general principles:

- Open space shall be open for use by the public at all times, and shall be both visually and physically accessible from public sidewalks, the Skyway System, and future Light Rail Transit facilities.
- Open space shall be designed as a useable space for people. The design of open spaces, including size, location, and the placement, height, and function of adjacent architecture, shall support the purpose of the open space and the activities proposed therein.
- Open space shall contain public seating. All public seating shall have seatbacks.
- Open spaces shall be designed for extended seasonal use by providing a combination of spaces that allow for a variety of conditions including: direct sunlight, partial shade, and protection from prevailing winds.
- Buildings fronting on open space shall be built out to property lines in order to maintain a consistent building envelope around the perimeter of the open space.
- Buildings fronting on open space shall include retail and service establishments, such as shops, cafes, restaurants, etc., at the street level. These establishments shall be immediately adjacent to the open space, and shall have easy access to the open space.
- Open space shall contain a variety of pedestrian amenities such as trees, landscaping, fountains and reflecting pools, works of art, drinking fountains, public telephones, open air cafes, kiosks, litter receptacles, etc.
- Landscaped areas shall be designed as useable public spaces, shall provide public seating and shall provide adequate amounts of landscaping appropriate to an urban park or garden. In addition, facilities or spaces for markets, sidewalk vendors, and public art would be desirable and shall be allowed.

**4.7 Transportation:** See below.

## **5.0 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION**

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### **5.1 Transit**

Mass transit options (including Light Rail Transit, city bus service, suburban commuter bus service, and Downtown Circulator bus service) shall be considered the chief priority for developing solutions to meet the demands of an increasingly intense and active Downtown Core. In addition, special emphasis

shall be given to developing a full array of alternatives to driving alone, including programs such as Minnesota Rideshare. Bicycle transportation and bicycle parking shall be accommodated within the project area by complying with bicycle transportation policies contained in the Downtown Transportation Management Plan.

All property owners in the project area are required to develop a transportation management plan. Likewise, all property owners are required to be members of the Downtown Transportation Management Organization, and must comply with the goals and objectives of same.

*5.1.1 Nicollet Mall Intermodal Transit Station:* Downtown LRT stations, particularly the Nicollet Mall station, will function differently than those in the neighborhoods. This difference in function is related to its higher level of use relative to most of the other stations on the line. The Nicollet Mall Station will be the destination for most patrons riding northbound trains. Likewise, most of the patrons riding southbound trains during the evening rush hour will embark at the Nicollet Mall Station. In addition, the Nicollet Mall station will be a key transfer point between light rail and the Downtown Circulator. This function as a transfer point will occur regardless of where the Circulator transfer facility is eventually located. For these reasons, special design considerations must be taken into account for the LRT station at Nicollet Mall:

- (a.) Wider station platforms:* Station platforms in downtown stations should be wider than those in the neighborhoods because of the greater number of transit patrons who will be using these stations (during highly compressed periods of time). During times of highest use, passengers disembarking trains at downtown stations will need to move efficiently (read "quickly") into the pedestrian circulation system in order to avoid tie-ups at station platforms.
- (b.) Optimal ability to move away from platform to downtown sidewalks:* It is necessary to design downtown stations so that all passengers are not required to walk to the ends of the block before fanning out into the downtown pedestrian circulation system. For instance, at the Nicollet Mall Station, it will be important for patrons to be able to easily walk across the train tracks (once the train has left the station) onto an adjacent plaza (or enclosed waiting area) on the south end of the Powers Block. This will alleviate the large crowds that would congest station platforms while waiting at signaled crosswalks on the north and south ends of the station.
- (c.) Direct, visible connection to the skyway and tunnel systems:* Because the downtown skyway system (and the tunnel system in the Government Center complex) is a key feature of downtown



pedestrian circulation, it is critical that LRT patrons are afforded direct access to these systems. Direct access will enhance and increase ridership in two ways: First, it will provide the obvious weather-related convenience. Second, and just as important, direct access to the downtown skyway and tunnel system from the station platform will enhance the ability of patrons to move quickly away from the stations so that subsequent trains can easily and quickly discharge the next load of passengers.

(d.) Public entrances to LRT stations (from downtown streets, skyways, and tunnels) shall be highly visible and easily accessible to the general public during the regular hours of operation for the LRT system.

5.1.2 *Downtown Circulator Service:* The Downtown Circulator Service is planned to transport people to and from the Nicollet Mall LRT station along points north and south on the Nicollet Mall/Marquette Avenue corridor. The transfer station for the Downtown Circulator should be coordinated with a single intermodal transit station (at the site of the Nicollet Mall LRT Station). The connection between rail and the Circulator should be enhanced by providing a climate-controlled waiting area. Convenience retail should be included within the intermodal transit station. Ultimately, this intermodal transit station would be integrated into future development on the Powers Block. It shall be designed in such a way as to rationalize pedestrian circulation and the pedestrian environment in and around the intersections of South 5<sup>th</sup> Street with Nicollet Mall and Marquette Avenues, particularly in regards to the following:

- Passenger connections between LRT and the Circulator
- Passenger connections from the intermodal transit stop to and from downtown sidewalks
- Passenger connections to and from the intermodal transit station to and from downtown skyways, tunnels, and arcades
- Passenger connections to and from pedestrian open spaces

5.1.3 *Downtown Shuttle Bus Service:* As it was originally conceived, shuttle service would draw all commuter bus service into two terminal facilities (one of which would be located in the Leamington Ramp, the other on the Nicollet Hotel Block). From these facilities bus patrons would board a downtown shuttle bus which would transport people up and down the Mall. Any further consideration of the Downtown Shuttle Service should be taken up as the Department of Public Works prepares its Downtown Transportation Study.

## **5.2 Streets and traffic**

The Department of Public Works is currently preparing the Downtown Transportation Study. Specific adjustments to existing street and traffic patterns will be proposed and adopted as part of that study.

## **5.3 Pedestrian Circulation**

**5.3.1 Sidewalks:** The City's system of sidewalks will remain the primary means of pedestrian circulation in Downtown Minneapolis. Within the project area, the following requirements shall apply:

- All sidewalks along Nicollet Mall will conform with the existing design standards for the Mall.
- All other sidewalks, crosswalks, handicap ramps, and curb cuts will conform to the City's Code of Ordinances regarding sidewalk design.
- As a critical feature of the public realm, sidewalks shall be designed in close coordination with the kind and level of activity that will result from adjacent development.
- See also item 6.1.1 "Streetscape."

**5.3.2 Skyways:** Skyways shall connect the project area to the office/retail core on the south and to the Gateway District on the east. Visible connections between the Skyway System and Hennepin Avenue should be made in order to facilitate easy interchange between sidewalks on Hennepin Avenue and in the Warehouse District and the Skyway System in the Downtown Core. Visible connections between the Skyway System and Washington Avenue should be made to facilitate easy interchange between those sidewalks that lead to and from the river with the skyways in the Downtown Core. Within the project area, the following requirements shall apply:

- Direct vertical connections from the skyway system shall be made to the passenger loading platform(s) of the Nicollet Mall LRT Station.
- The Minneapolis Public Library shall be connected by skyways to the office/retail core.
- Skyways shall adhere to established skyway design guidelines.
- Elevator and stair connections between the street and skyway level shall be clearly identifiable and directly accessible from the sidewalks adjacent to the exterior of the building.
- In accordance with the Downtown Council's Uniform Hours Program for the skyway system, all skyways and concourses shall be open during the following hours: Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 10 p.m.; Saturday from 9:30 am to 8 p.m.; Sunday from noon to 6 p.m.
- Skyways shall not encroach upon the public right-of-way, except where skyways cross streets to connect to other buildings or parking facilities.

5.3.3 *Pedestrian tunnels:* All off-grade pedestrian connections made from the North Mall area to the west side of Hennepin Avenue (including potential connections to the TAD Garages) shall be built as underground pedestrian tunnels (1) in order to preserve views along Hennepin Avenue, and (2) in order to maintain the historic fabric of the Warehouse District.

5.3.4 *Pedestrian arcades:* Through-block, at-grade pedestrian arcades shall be encouraged to enhance clear, visible connections between downtown sidewalks, skyway and/or tunnel connections, transit stations, public plazas, underground parking, and building lobbies.

## **5.4 Parking**

The intent of existing City policy for downtown parking is to encourage transit use, make parking close to the retail core available to shoppers, increase pedestrian activity on both streets and skyways, and to provide continuous high-density building development. Long-term and all-day parking should be accommodated in peripheral parking garages. In keeping with this policy, parking in the North Nicollet Mall area should be primarily for short-term users. Exceptions to this policy should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.4.1 *Structured parking:* The current Library Block, the Powers Block, and the Ritz Block are all included in the Primary Core (as approved by City Council in November 1999). The on-site parking requirements for development of most structures erected in these blocks would be minimal. Nevertheless, off-street, structured parking must be considered to meet five potential needs:

- Short-term parking for office and shopping visits within the Downtown Core (particularly as replacements for current short-term parking facilities)
- Short-term parking for Library patrons
- Short-term guest parking at potential hotel development
- Short-term guest parking at potential residential development
- Potential long-term parking needs: In some cases, it may be considered necessary to make exceptions to the City's existing parking policy in order to allow for the construction of limited long term parking within the project area. Exceptions should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such exceptions may be considered necessary to allow for long-term parking to a degree sufficient to support residences, office tenancy, and hotel operations. Each case should be determined based on a balanced review of its relative merits in four areas: (a) functionality, (b) land use impact, (c) urban design characteristics, and (b) feasibility and cost effectiveness. The intention here is to continue to discourage

development of long-term parking in the core as a primary use of land but to acknowledge the economic importance of long term parking in support of other primary land uses in the project area.

Due to the high profile nature of this particular area of Downtown, above-grade structured parking in the project area should be discouraged, or at least minimized. In cases where this is not possible, above-grade structured parking should be carefully designed according to the following measures:

- No above-grade parking will be permitted in those portions of a block that face directly onto Nicollet Mall, Hennepin Avenue, or South 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The intention of this measure is to retain, protect, and enhance the special character and prominence of these streets in downtown Minneapolis.
- Above-grade parking will not be permitted on the street level or skyway level of any building where parking facilities include a façade that faces directly onto a downtown street. The intention of this measure is to ensure that the function, character, and fabric of downtown pedestrian spaces is enhanced, rather than hindered, by the addition of new downtown development.
- Above-grade parking facilities that face directly onto a downtown street will have a façade that is designed in order to conceal above-grade parking levels from outside the building. The design of such building facades should blend the architectural massing, rhythm, fenestration, and materials treatment of the façade of the parking structure with the building facades at the ground-level, skyway level, and the building façade above parking levels. The intention of this measure is to ensure that the external facade of the building is uniformly designed and that the existence of above-grade structured parking is not recognizable from the external portions of the building.

Wherever possible, structured parking should be located underground in order to minimize the intrusion of parking ramps on the function, character, and architectural fabric of the surrounding area. Underground parking structures that stretch beneath two or more blocks should be considered. Underground structured parking should be considered for each Park/"Great Space" site. Encroachments upon the public right-of-way for below-grade parking should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The following guidelines are required for all structured parking facilities:

- All parking garages constructed shall meet the latest Parking Ramp Safety Guidelines as approved by the City Council.
- Any public parking garage must have the entrance designated by the standard parking identification sign used by the City for public facilities.

- Access ramps to parking garages shall not be allowed to encroach upon the public right-of-way.

5.4.2 *Surface lots:* Surface parking lots are no longer a permitted use in downtown Minneapolis.

5.4.3 *Street parking:* Street parking will not be permitted on Nicollet Mall, Hennepin Avenue, Marquette Avenue, or Washington Avenue. Street parking otherwise may be permitted in select locations. Further consideration of locations for street parking will be taken up as the Department of Public Works completes its Downtown Transportation Study.

## 6.0 DESIGN

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### 6.1 *Urban form and image*

6.1.1 *Streetscape:* The creation and extension of street level environments shall be a chief priority within the project area. Streetscape improvements along Nicollet Mall, Hennepin Avenue, First Avenue North, and Washington Avenue, shall adhere to the following plans and guidelines:

- Streetscape improvements along the Nicollet Mall should be consistent with the approved plan for the Mall, so that the image of the Mall is consistent along its entire length.
- Along Washington Avenue, between First Avenue North and Marquette Avenue, a distance of approximately 20 feet between new buildings and the roadway curb should be retained for street trees and landscaping.
- Street trees and pedestrian-scale streetlights shall be included along Hennepin Avenue.
- Access ramps to parking garages shall not be allowed to encroach upon the public right-of-way.

Streetscape improvements to other streets shall adhere to Department of Public Works design standards.

6.1.2 *Public improvements and landscaping:* Public improvements such as landscaping, lighting, and street furniture should be sensitive to the surrounding context. Given the prominence of this district in downtown, distinctive public improvements and landscaping are encouraged. In the blocks along Hennepin Avenue that are considered an extension to the present Entertainment District (south of Washington Avenue), non-traditional public improvements and landscaping are possible.

6.1.3 *Parks and Open Space:* See item 4.6, above.

6.1.4 *Structured Parking*: See item 5.4.1, above.

## **6.2 Building Form and Image**

6.2.1 *Building placement*: In order to maintain continuity of street frontage, and to ensure that sidewalks and other public spaces remain interesting and active, buildings shall extend out to property lines, except where relevant open space or transit related uses are suggested (see above). Buildings should be placed so that principal entrances front on the public street. The placement of buildings should reinforce the streetwall and be compatible with the surrounding area. Placement of buildings should be sensitive to their relationship to landmark buildings. In addition, placement of buildings should also be sensitive to existing and potential views of the downtown skyline, and to existing and potential views between the Mississippi River and Nicollet Mall.

6.2.2 *Building height and mass*: Building height and massing should be compatible with those structures in the surrounding area. Precautions should be taken in the height and massing of towers so that the creation of high velocity winds is avoided. Buildings along Nicollet Mall should be lower in scale, and should incorporate a setback at an elevation of approximately 80 feet above sidewalk grade.

6.2.3 *Roofscapes*: The incorporation of usable roof spaces is encouraged as a way to expand the potential for, and variety of uses in this part of downtown. Those roofscapes on the lower floors of a building should be made fully accessible for use by the general public.

6.2.4 *Building facades*: Building facades should provide architectural detail and texture. Exterior material and appearance should be sensitive to the surrounding area. Given the prominence of this district in downtown, distinctive architectural design and treatment for building facades are encouraged. In those blocks of Hennepin Avenue that are considered an extension of the present Entertainment District (south of Washington Avenue, on the west side of Hennepin Avenue), non-traditional architectural design and treatments for the facade are possible, except in those locations where specific preservation restrictions apply.

All building facades should contain windows at the ground level in order to create visual interest and to increase security of adjacent outdoor spaces by maximizing natural surveillance and visibility. In order to provide an active street, building facades at street level, especially along the Mall, should be transparent, allowing views from the street into interior commercial and retail frontage. Buildings along the Mall are encouraged to contain retail and service frontage as specified above. In all cases, the first floor facade that faces a public street or sidewalk

should be occupied by a commercial space, or designed with architectural details such as display windows, to create a visual appearance of actively programmed space.

Exterior materials and the appearance of the rear and side walls of any building should be compatible with the front of that building. Full block development should present a “frontal” image on all four sides, avoiding a “back door” or service image on any frontage that faces a street.

Building facades for above-grade structured parking should conform to those standards stated in Section 5.4.1.

- 6.2.5 *Signage:* Colorful, bright, and illuminated signage is highly desirable. Given the prominence of this district in downtown, distinctive signage treatments are encouraged. In those blocks of Hennepin Avenue that are considered an extension of the present Entertainment District (south of Washington Avenue), non-traditional signage is possible except in those locations where specific preservation restrictions apply. In all cases, signage design and installation should be sensitive to the surrounding context.
- 6.2.6 *Loading facilities and garbage storage:* Loading facilities and garbage storage must be located off-street and should not be visible from the public sidewalk. Loading and unloading facilities for taxis, limousines, vanpools, carpools, and vehicles for the disabled should be accommodated off-street to preserve the safe, free flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Access to loading and garbage facilities will not be permitted along South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Washington Avenue South, Nicollet Mall, and Hennepin Avenue. Access to loading and garbage facilities will be discouraged along Marquette Avenue.
- 6.2.7 *Curb cuts:* Curb cuts for parking and loading facilities should be integrated with one another. The number and width of curb cuts should be minimized and parking ingress and egress should be consolidated where possible. Access to parking facilities will not be permitted along South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Washington Avenue South, Nicollet Mall, and Hennepin Avenue. Access to parking facilities will be discouraged along Marquette Avenue.
- 6.2.8 *Designed for public safety:* All new construction and renovation should be designed according to public safety considerations. Each project will be required to undergo review through the City program known as “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design,” or CPTED. The review will be required at early concept stage and throughout the design development process.

## **7.0 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS**

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A detailed plan for public improvements will be part of the development program. Its elements are anticipated to include:

- A Nicollet Mall Intermodal Transit Station to facilitate connections between the Hiawatha LRT line, the Downtown Circulator, downtown sidewalks, and the Skyway System (See item 5.1).
- A new Central Library (See item 4.5.1).
- A new downtown public Park/"Great Space" (See item 4.6).
- Possible streetscape improvements within the project area along Hennepin and Washington Avenues (See item 5.3.1 and 6.1.1).
- A possible Downtown Shuttle Terminal on the Old Nicollet Mall Hotel Block (See item 5.2.4).
- Extension of off-grade pedestrian connections through the project area to include highly-visible, direct connections between ( a) buildings in the project area and buildings in the Downtown Core and the Gateway District and between (b) buildings in the project area and the sidewalks, outdoor spaces, and transit facilities within the project area (See items 5.2.1c, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, and 5.3.4).
- Improvements, which may be determined appropriate for a development project within the project area, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Those areas/streets which have not been improved and repaved must be done on a coordinated basis. Likewise, those streets without ornamental lighting must be lighted to provide for the safe movement of people and vehicles after dark.

## **8.0 REDEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

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### **8.1 *Project activities***

Project activities will need to respond to a variety of public and private project schedules. Generally speaking, the sequence of activities will be as follows:

- Approval of Development Objectives
- Coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation on the design of Light Rail Transit facilities, and development of design guidelines for LRT stations and pedestrian linkages.
- Coordination with the Minneapolis Library Board on the siting and design of a new Central Library facility.



- Preparation of detailed design plans and criteria for new Park/"Great Space".
- Preparation of detailed public improvement plans, cost estimates, and funding sources.
- Staff review of development plans for conformance with these Development Objectives.
- Establishment of the development district under Minnesota law, as may be required.
- Establishment of tax increment financing (TIF) districts, as may be required.
- Authorization of redevelopment agreements which may involve MCDA assistance with financing, site assembly, appraisals, acquisition, relocation, and demolition, in response to project objectives and public improvement needs.

## ***8.2 Affirmative Action***

Development projects receiving assistance from the MCDA or city will be required to comply with the provisions of all applicable federal, state and City of Minneapolis statutes, ordinances and regulations pertaining to civil rights, affirmative action and nondiscrimination, including submission of a written Affirmative Action Plan as defined by Minneapolis Ordinance Chapter 139 and the Guidelines thereto.

## ***8.3 Job Development***

Certain commercial revitalization projects may be covered by the Minnesota Business Subsidy Act, requiring the establishment of job goals, and setting out penalties for those projects not meeting established goals. The level of City development assistance provided will determine whether or not a project is exempted from this Act.

Under the City's existing employment policy, commercial revitalization projects are exempted from Job Linkage and Living Wage requirements.

## ***8.4 Relocation***

The MCDA will provide relocation services and benefits in accordance with City and Federal policies to residential and non-residential tenants displaced from properties acquired by the City or its agencies. Any costs that the MCDA or City may incur for relocation services and benefits must be recoverable from project revenues available to the City.

### **8.5 Project Timing**

No overall project schedule has been developed. Timing of public improvements and private redevelopment will depend on market conditions and individual development proposals.

### **8.6 Required Governmental Approvals**

- The City Planning Commission, the City Council, the Mayor, the Heritage Preservation Commission, and the MCDA Board will perform their normal reviews of redevelopment activities occurring within the project area.
- The Library Board will review proposals related to library property.
- All development projects will be required to submit a traffic management plan for review and approval by the City.
- Project-by-project environmental reviews will be accomplished by established local processes.

### **8.7 Project Administration**

The MCDA will be responsible for administering any redevelopment agreements as well as the establishment of redevelopment and TIF district(s) within the project area.

### **8.8 Reporting**

To be defined in any development contact with the MCDA.

## **9.0 FINANCING**

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Tax increment financing or other public financial assistance for private development or public facilities will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any request for public assistance must include detailed financial information justifying such assistance. A mechanism for providing the recapture of invested public funds must also be included.

## **10.0 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

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An advisory board, made up primarily of residents and owners of property in and adjacent to any proposed development district, will be established in accordance with Minnesota law. Public hearings will be held prior to establishment of any new development district or tax increment financing district.

## 11.0 POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

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In an effort to sort out the important issues related to future development in and around the north end of Nicollet Mall, four schemes for potential development were drawn up (See pages 28-35). These schemes were created in order to build a deeper understanding of the opportunities and possibilities that exist "on the ground." These schemes were *not* created as a means to predetermine the architectural design or character of particular buildings or spaces. None of these schemes are intended to serve as a *final* version of what could or should happen on the north end of the Mall. Instead, each scheme is intended to serve as a springboard that will give shape to subsequent discussion.

Each scheme is represented by the following:

- A textual description and list of the advantages or disadvantages of that particular scheme
- An illustration that shows the spatial configuration for the land uses and activities that should be taken into consideration

## **11.1 Scheme 1: Potential Development**

*Nicollet Hotel Block:* Residential  
*Current Library Block:* Park/"Great Space"  
*Ritz Block:* New Central Library  
*Powers Block:* Hotel

### 11.1.1 Advantages:

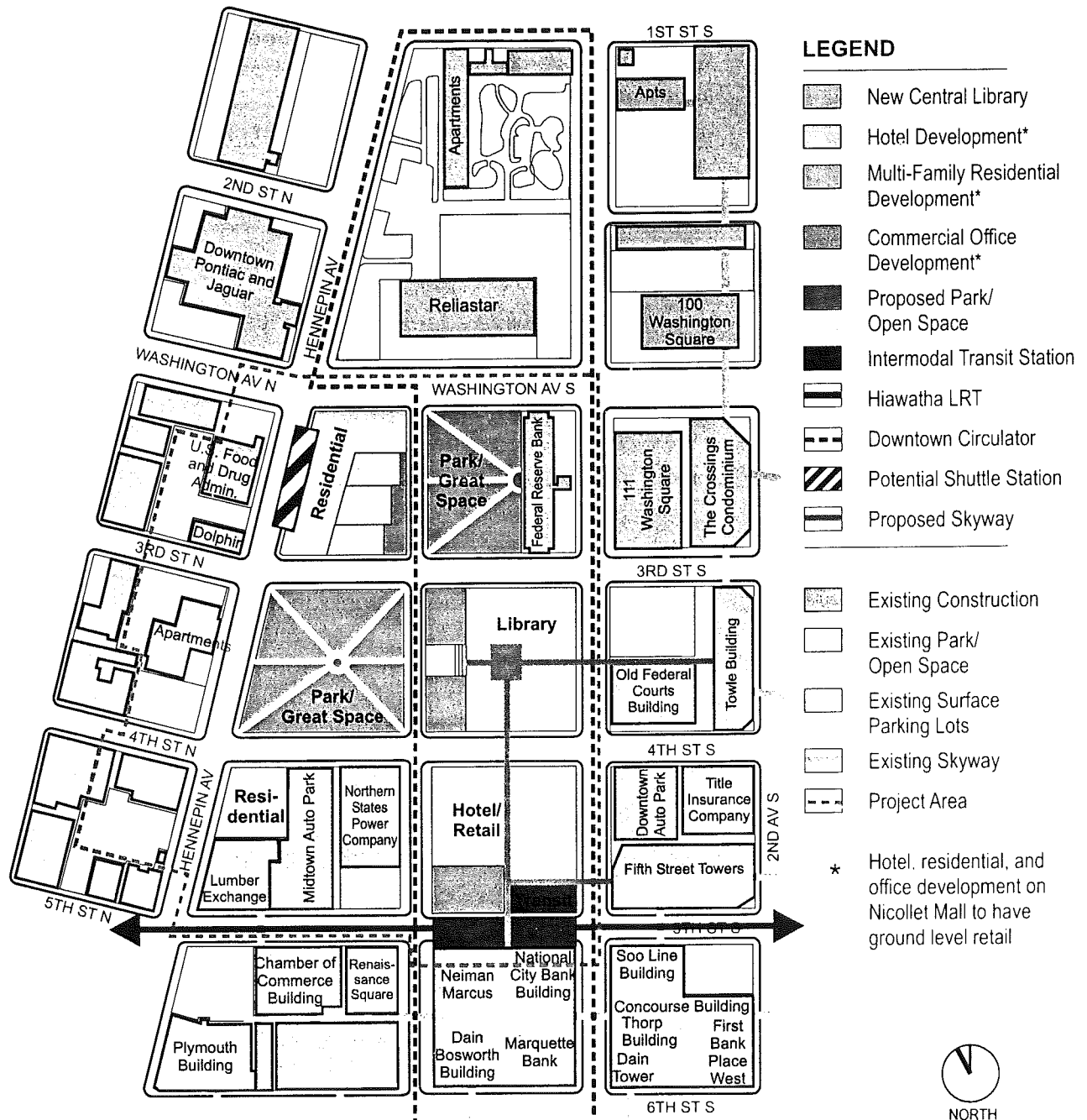
- Intermodal transit station (LRT and Downtown Circulator Bus Service) could be incorporated into new development
- New Library is located in Library Board's preferred site
- New Library is a stand-alone facility
- Library would be required to move only-one time
- Hotel is directly adjacent to LRT service
- Hotel is located in close proximity to Downtown Core
- New Park/"Great Space" would frame architecture of new Library
- New Park/"Great Space" offers civic gathering space in a key location that could serve both the Library and the Entertainment District
- New Park/"Great Space" is close enough to Downtown Core for use by workers at lunchtime
- New Park/"Great Space" is located close proximity to new residential development
- New Park/"Great Space" would enhance the value of properties on the west side of Hennepin Avenue and encourage new infill development
- Architecture of new Residential Development could "bookend" new Park/"Great Space" and frame architectural prominence of New Library (from Hennepin Avenue).

### 11.1.2 Disadvantages

- Depending on building design, new Park/"Great Space" could be in shadow of hotel development during the morning hours
- Potential Downtown Shuttle Bus terminal would need to be incorporated into a residential development

## Development Objectives

### NORTH NICOLLET MALL



### SCHEME 1: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Minneapolis Planning Department / Minneapolis Community Development Agency  
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## **11.2 Scheme 2: Potential Development**

*Nicollet Hotel Block:* Park/"Great Space"  
*Current Library Block:* New Central Library  
*Ritz Block:* Hotel/Residential  
*Powers Block:* Hotel

### **11.2.1 Advantages:**

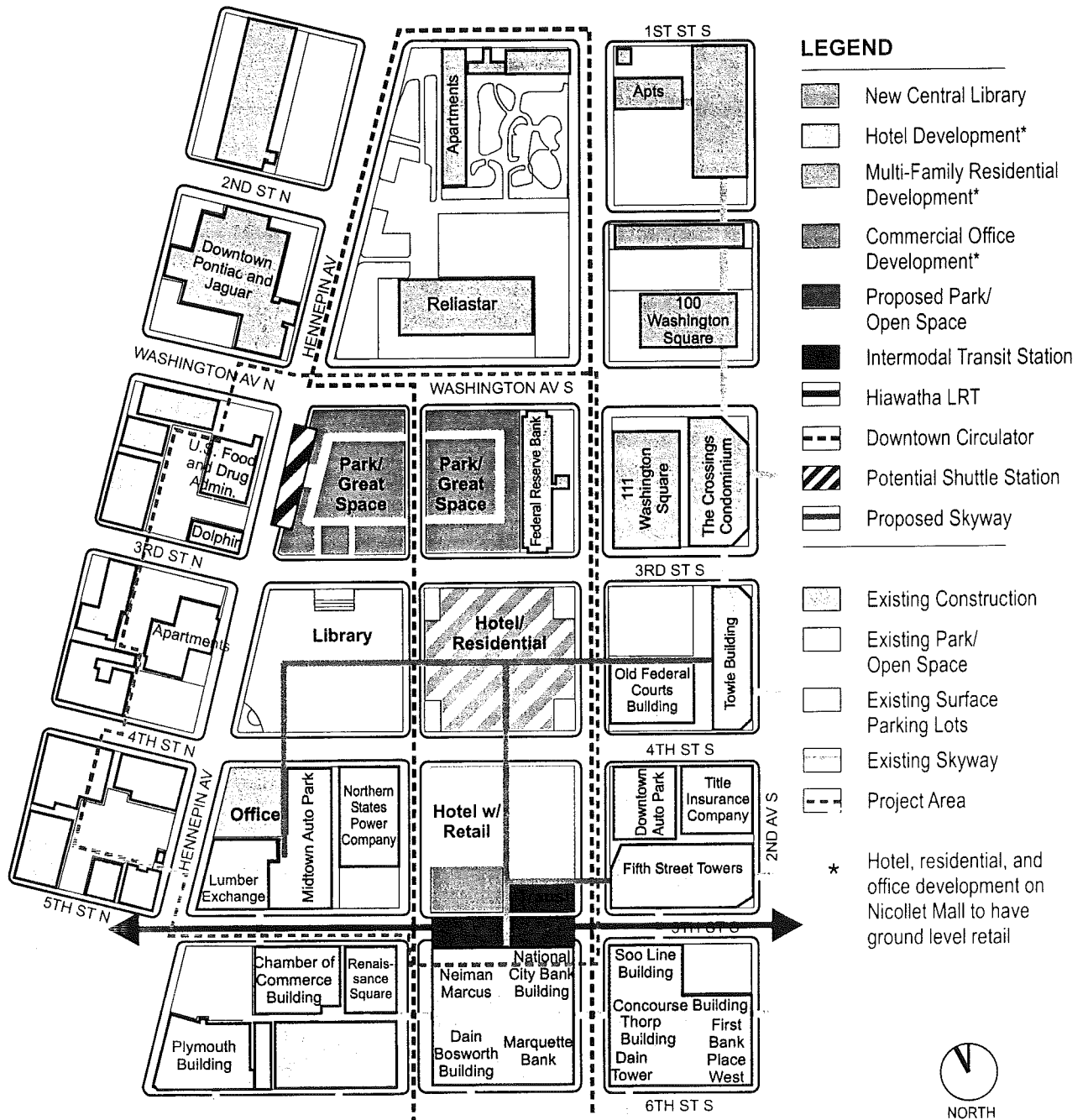
- Intermodal transit station (LRT and Downtown Circulator Bus Service) could be incorporated into new development
- New Library would be a stand-alone facility
- Hotel is directly adjacent to LRT service
- Hotel is located in close proximity to Downtown Core
- New Park/"Great Space" would extend green space around Gateway Plaza in a southerly direction and frame architecture of new Library
- New Park/"Great Space" could be developed in conjunction with reconfigured open space at Marquette Plaza (the Old Federal Reserve Bank Building)
- New Park/"Great Space" would enhance the value of properties on the west side of Hennepin Avenue and encourage new infill development
- Potential Downtown Shuttle Bus terminal could be easily incorporated into a new Park/"Great Space"

### **11.2.2 Disadvantages:**

- Library would be located in Library Board's second-best site
- Library would be required to find temporary quarters and move twice
- Depending on building design, new Park/"Great Space" could be in shadow of hotel development during the morning hours

## Design Guidelines/Development Objectives

### NORTH NICOLLET MALL



### SCHEME 2: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

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### **11.3 Scheme 3: Potential Development**

*Nicollet Hotel Block:* Residential  
*Current Library Block:* New Central Library  
*Ritz Block:* MXD: Library/Hotel/Residential/Office  
*Powers Block:* MXD: Hotel/Residential/Office

#### **11.3.1 Advantages:**

- Intermodal transit station (LRT and Downtown Circulator Bus Service) could be incorporated into new development
- New Library is located in Library Board's preferred site
- Library is required to move only one time
- Hotel is directly adjacent to LRT service
- Hotel is located in close proximity to Downtown Core
- New Park/"Great Space" would frame architecture of new Library
- New Park/"Great Space" close enough to core for use by workers at lunchtime
- New Park/"Great Space" offers civic gathering space in a key location that could serve both the Library and the Entertainment District
- New Park/"Great Space" would enhance the value of properties on the west side of Hennepin Avenue and encourage new infill development
- Architecture of new Residential Development could "bookend" new Park/"Great Space" and frame architectural prominence of New Library (from Hennepin Avenue).

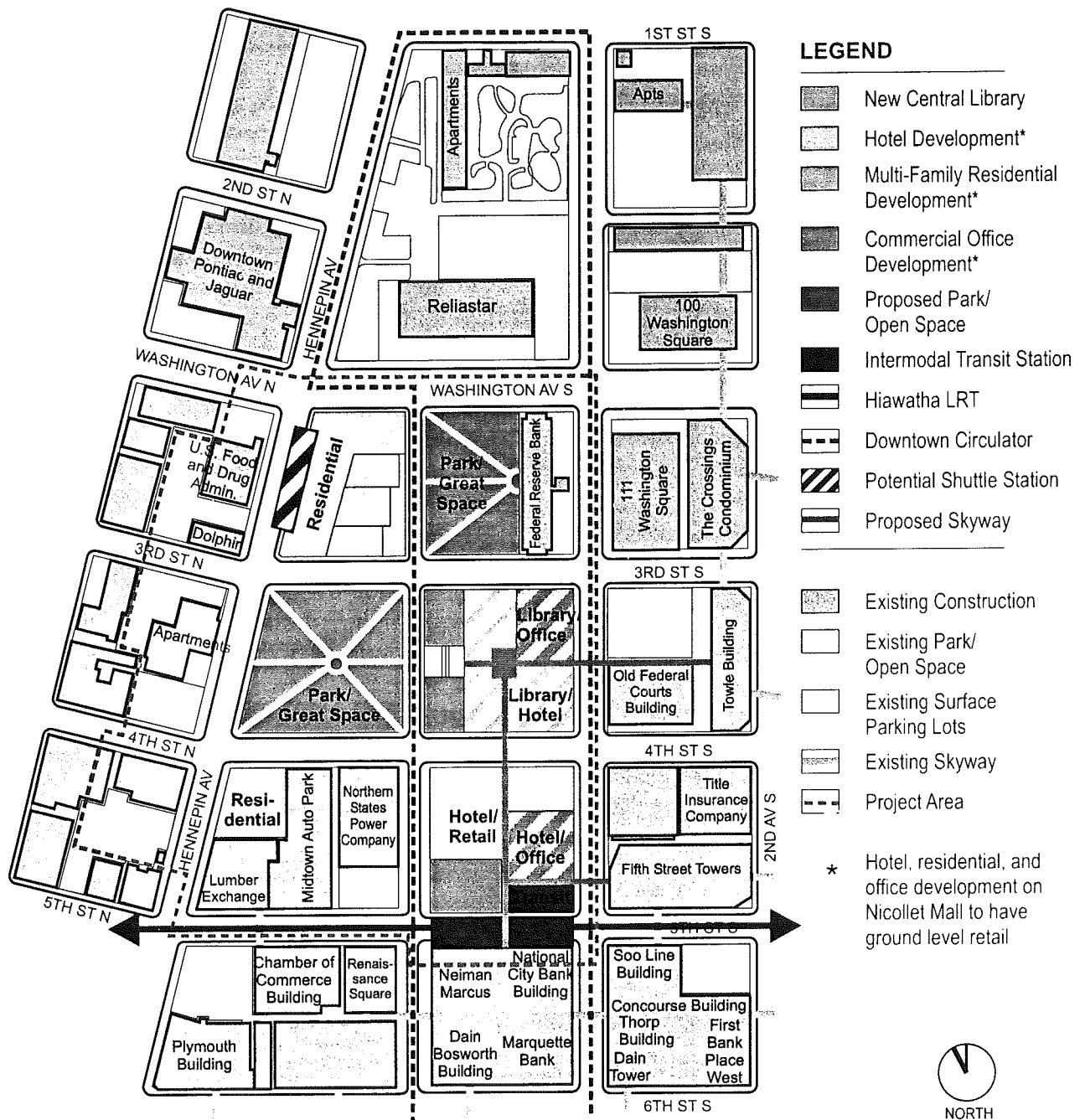
#### **11.3.2 Disadvantages:**

- New Library is not a stand-alone facility; may be tenant in MXD
- Architectural commission of Library is complicated if it is part of MXD project
- Depending on building design, new Park/"Great Space" could be in shadow of hotel development during the morning hours
- Potential Downtown Shuttle Bus terminal would need to be incorporated into a residential development



## Design Guidelines/Development Objectives

### NORTH NICOLLET MALL



### SCHEME 3: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

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#### **11.4 Scheme 4: Potential Development**

*Nicollet Hotel Block:* Park/"Great Space"  
*Current Library Block:* Residential  
*Ritz Block:* Hotel  
*Powers Block:* New Central Library

##### 11.4.1 Advantages:

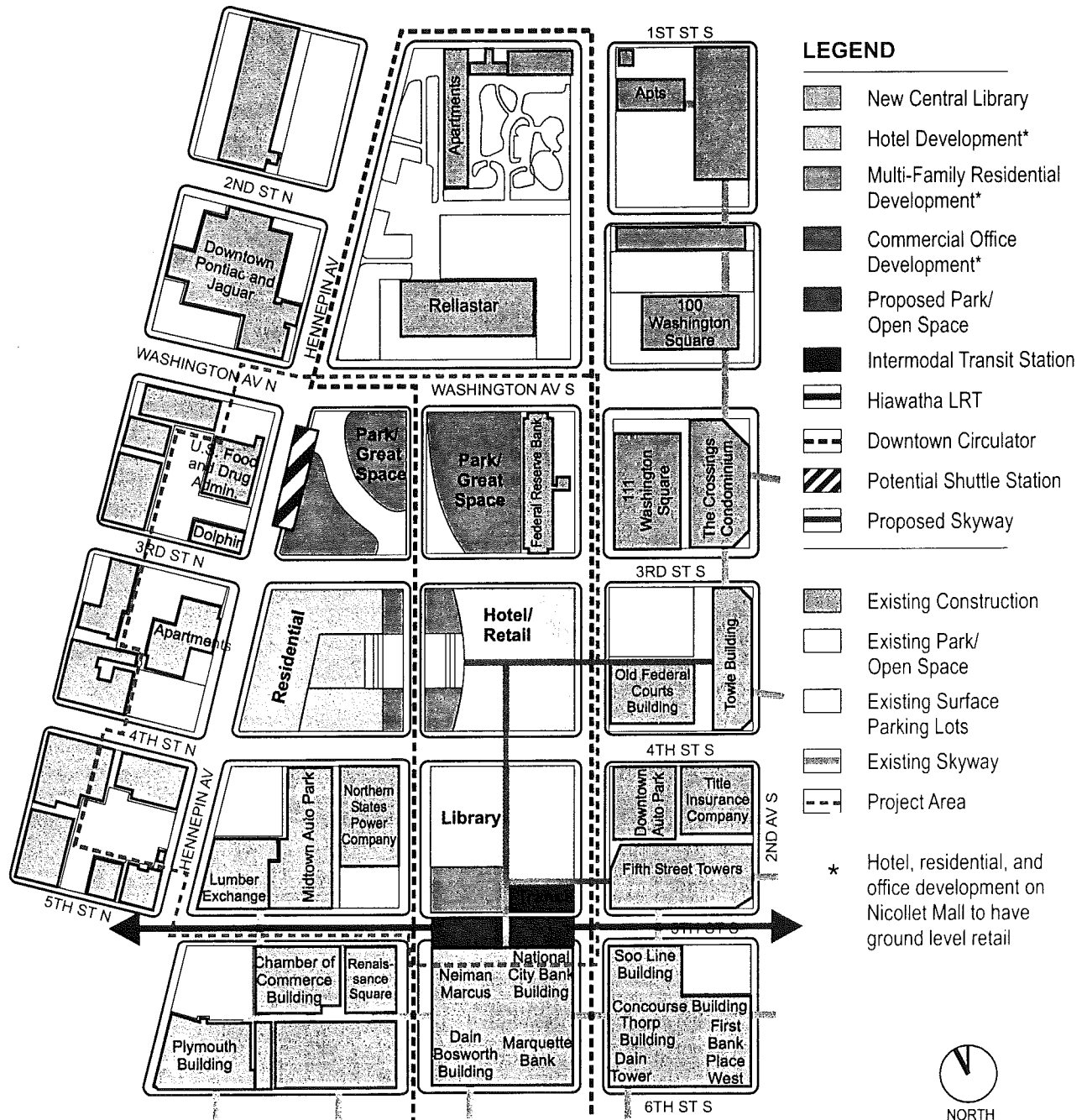
- Intermodal transit station (LRT and Downtown Circulator Bus Service) could be incorporated into new development
- Public development projects are concentrated into a single, high-profile block (Powers Block)
- New Library is directly adjacent to LRT service
- Library is required to move only one time
- Hotel is located in close proximity to Downtown Core
- New Park/"Great Space" could be developed in conjunction with reconfigured open space at Marquette Plaza (the Old Federal Reserve Bank Building)
- New Park/"Great Space" would enhance the value of properties on the west side of Hennepin Avenue and encourage new infill development
- Potential Downtown Shuttle Bus terminal could be easily incorporated into a new Park/"Great Space"

##### 11.4.2 Disadvantages:

- Library is not located on Library Board's preferred site or second-choice site
- Hotel is not directly adjacent to LRT service
- Depending on building design, new Park/"Great Space" would be in shadow of hotel and residential development

## Design Guidelines/Development Objectives

### NORTH NICOLLET MALL



#### SCHEME 4: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

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## NOTES

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